United Nations A/CONF.224/INF/1

General Assembly

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Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction
Sendai, Japan, 14-18 March 2015

Information for participants

Note by the secretariat

I. Background

1. By its resolution 68/211 of 20 December 2013, the General Assembly decided that the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction would be held from 14 to 18 March 2015 in Sendai, Japan. The Assembly also decided that the Conference would be convened at the highest possible level, result in a concise, focused, forward-looking and action-oriented outcome document and have the following objectives: (a) to complete the assessment and review of the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action; (b) to consider the experience gained through the regional and national strategies/institutions and plans for disaster risk reduction and their recommendations as well as relevant regional agreements under the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action; (c) to adopt a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction; (d) to identify modalities of cooperation based on commitments to implement a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction; and (e) to determine modalities for periodic review of the implementation of a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.

II. Date and venue of the Conference

2. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/211, the Conference will be held from 14 to 18 March 2015 in Sendai, Japan.

3. Sendai is approximately 300 kilometres north of Tokyo on the Pacific coast of Honshu, the largest of Japan's four major islands.

4. The main Conference venue is the Sendai International Centre.

5. Other facilities located in Sendai will be used by partners for public events throughout the Conference period. Further information on these activities is available on the Conference website at www.wcdrr.org.

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III. Secretariat of the Conference

6. The secretariat of the Conference is the secretariat of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and can be contacted at wcdrr2015@un.org.

7. The Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management or his representative will serve as Secretary of the Conference.

IV. Opening of the Conference and seating arrangements

8. The formal opening plenary meeting of the Conference will commence at 11 a.m. on Saturday, 14 March 2015 in the Sendai International Centre and will consider all procedural and organizational matters, including the election of the President of the Conference, the adoption of the draft provisional rules of procedure and the provisional agenda, the election of officers, the establishment of a Main Committee (if needed) and the appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee.

9. At the opening of the Conference and at subsequent plenary meetings, the delegation of each State participating in the Conference and that of the European Union will be assigned four seats: two at the table and two behind. Seating will also be specifically assigned for other participants at the Conference.

10. Only holders of secondary passes will be able to attend the opening plenary meeting. More information on this will be made available on the Conference website at www.wcdrr.org. For reasons of security, participants may be prevented from bringing in certain items, such as umbrellas and plastic bottles, to the opening plenary meeting. Participants who do not hold secondary passes will be able to follow the opening plenary meeting through live video feed in an overflow room.

V. Agenda and programme of work

11. The provisional agenda, provisional programme of work and provisional rules of procedure of the Conference are contained in documents A/CONF.224/1, A/CONF.224/2 and A/CONF.224/3 respectively.

12. There will be nine plenary meetings, including the opening and closing meetings. The list of speakers for the general exchange of views will be established on a first-come, first-served basis, with the customary protocol that ensures that Heads of State or Government speak first, followed by other heads of delegation. The European Union, in its capacity as observer, will be included in the list of speakers. The details for inscription in the list of speakers will be announced in the Journal. It is proposed that a time limit of five minutes be established for each statement. In addition to representatives of States participating in the Conference and that of the European Union, representatives of the following may, time permitting and without setting a precedent, make a statement in the general debate: (a) intergovernmental organizations and other entities that have received a standing invitation from the General Assembly to participate in the capacity of observer in the sessions and work of all international conferences convened under its auspices (rule 60 of the draft provisional rules of procedure); (b) specialized agencies and

related organizations (rule 61); (c) other intergovernmental organizations (rule 62); (d) interested United Nations organs (rule 63); and (e) associated members of regional commissions (rule 65). The representatives of the non-governmental organizations and other major groups may also be added to the list of speakers (rule 64).

13. In addition to the discussions in the plenary and in any subsidiary bodies that may be established, the Conference will include five ministerial round tables and three high- level multi-stakeholder partnership dialogues, which will be held in the Sendai International Centre.

Ministerial round tables

14. The five ministerial round tables will be held in parallel to the plenary meetings as follows: Sunday, 15 March, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. (Reconstructing after disasters: building back better); Sunday, 15 March, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. (International cooperation in support of a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction); Monday, 16 March, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. (Governing disaster risk: overcoming challenges); Monday, 16 March, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. (Reducing disaster risk in urban settings); Tuesday, 17 March, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. (Public investment strategies for disaster risk reduction).

15. Each ministerial round table will provide an opportunity for interactive and focused discussions on key priorities and actions in support of the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction, as it relates to each topic.

16. Each round table will have a chair, to be appointed by the President of the Conference from among the ministers attending the Conference in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution and taking into account invitations for nominations to be extended to the chairs of regional groups.

17. At the meetings of the ministerial round tables, there will be up to 40 seats at the table for Government delegations and at least 5 at the table for other participants. All seats at the table will also have one additional seat behind them.

18. The outcomes of the ministerial round tables will be reported to the Conference at the closing plenary meeting and be included in the final report of the Conference.

19. The five round tables will be interactive and multi-stakeholder in nature, with 45 seats each: up to 40 for Government delegations and at least 5 for other participants, including representatives of observers, entities of the United Nations system and other accredited intergovernmental organizations and major groups. States and other participants are encouraged to be represented at the round tables at the highest possible level. States were invited by the Conference secretariat to sign up for participation in one of the round tables in advance of the Conference, bearing in mind the total number of participants outlined above.

20. Any given State, observer, entity of the United Nations system or other accredited intergovernmental organization or representative of a major group may participate in only one of the round tables. Each participant may be accompanied by one adviser.

21. The list of participants in each round table will be made available prior to the meeting on the Conference website.

High level multi-stakeholder partnership dialogues

22. The three high-level multi-stakeholder partnership dialogues will be held in parallel to the plenary meetings as follows: Saturday, 14 March, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. (Mobilizing women's leadership in disaster risk reduction); Monday, 16 March, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. (Risk-sensitive investment: public-private partnerships); Tuesday, 17 March, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. (Inclusive disaster risk management: Governments, communities and groups acting together).

23. Each high-level multi-stakeholder partnership dialogue will provide an opportunity for interactive and focused discussions on key priorities and actions in support of the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction, as they relate to each topic.

24. The high-level multi-stakeholder partnership dialogues will be interactive and open to all Conference participants. Two co-chairs of the partnership dialogues will be appointed by the President of the Conference. At the discretion of the co-chairs or chairs, priority in the order of speakers will be given to those speaking at the level of Head of State or Government or at the ministerial level, followed by high-level representatives of other stakeholders. In order to provide for maximum participation, interventions should not exceed three minutes. Representatives of States are invited to indicate to the Secretariat by e-mail (palm@un.org, with a copy to goldfinch@un.org) if they will be represented in a partnership dialogue at the level of Head of State or Government or at the ministerial level.

25. At meetings of the high-level multi-stakeholder partnership dialogues, there will be free seating.

26. The outcomes of the high-level multi-stakeholder partnership dialogues will be reported to the Conference at the closing plenary meeting and be included in the final report of the Conference.

VI. Requests for meetings

27. Meetings of regional and other major groups of States, as well as bilateral meetings among States at the Head of State or Government or ministerial levels, will be accommodated subject to the availability of meeting rooms and services. Information on room requests will be posted on the Conference website at www.wcdrr.org.

VII. Interpretation

28. The six official languages of the Conference are Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. Statements made in the plenary, ministerial round tables and high-level multi-stakeholder partnership dialogues will be interpreted in the official languages. The extension of meetings beyond their normal duration and the provision of interpretation services to regional and other major groups of States and bilateral meetings will be arranged subject to the availability of interpretation services.

29. Statements made in any of the six official languages will be interpreted into the other official languages. Any representative may make a statement in a language other than the official languages. In such cases, the delegation should provide either an interpretation or a written text of the statement in one of the official languages in advance. The interpretation or written text will be considered by the secretariat to represent the official text of the statement and will be used by United Nations interpreters as the basis for interpretation into the official languages.

VIII. Documentation

30. The official documentation of the Conference will be issued in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

Distribution of official documents

31. A document counter with limited hard copies for delegations will be located in the main plenary hall. Delegations are encouraged to bring their own mobile devices loaded with the relevant documentation. All Conference documents will be available on the Conference website at www.wcdrr.org. A print-on-demand service will be available for a fee at the Business Centre for those delegations needing extra hard copies.

Circulation of written statements

32. Pursuant to rule 66 of the draft provisional rules of procedure of the Conference, written statements submitted by the designated representatives referred to in rules 60 to 65 shall be distributed by the secretariat to all delegations in the quantities and in the languages in which the statements are made available to it at the site of the Conference, provided that a statement submitted on behalf of a non-governmental organization is related to the work of the Conference and is on a subject in which the organization has a special competence. Copies of written statements shall not be made by the secretariat and the written statements shall not be issued as official documents of the Conference.

33. All delegations, prior to delivery of the statement, are kindly requested to e-mail a copy of their statement to wcdrr2015@un.org, indicating in the subject line, "Statement and name of country or organization". Where possible, statements should be provided one day in advance of delivery or at least three hours before the delivery of the statement for onward transmission to interpreters and secretariat note-takers and for posting on the Conference website.

IX. Accreditation and access of participants

States

34. Accredited delegates will be issued a Conference badge by the United Nations for access to the Conference site in Sendai from 14 to 18 March 2015 and to the meeting of the third session of the Preparatory Committee, on 13 March 2015. For

the opening plenary meeting on 14 March, in addition to the Conference badge, a secondary pass will be required for access.

35. Delegates holding a Conference badge are subject to screening at the Sendai International Centre. VIP (very important person) groups, including Heads of State or Government, Vice Presidents, Crown Princes/Princesses, Deputy Prime Ministers and cabinet ministers, as well as their spouses, will be issued a VIP badge and will be exempt from screening upon presentation of this badge.

36. Accreditation of official delegations of States, intergovernmental organizations and associate members of the regional commissions, as well as specialized agencies and related organizations, is handled by the United Nations Protocol and Liaison Service via an online system called "eAccreditation".

37. Delegates can choose to seek pre-accreditation or on-site accreditation to the Conference.

38. *Pre-accreditation* to the Conference in New York will be open from **7 January to 5 March 2015** at http://eaccreditation.un.int. Official delegations must go through their respective permanent/observer missions and offices in New York to gain access to the online system and are strongly advised to coordinate with them for timely submission of accreditation requests. Conference badges and VIP special badges will be issued on the basis of the following mandatory requirements:

(a) *Submit an official communication*, with official stamp and signed by the head of chancery or an authorizing official, to the United Nations Protocol and Liaison Service (Attn.: Wai Tak Chua, at Room S-0201 or by fax to +1 (212) 963-1921) providing an authorized list of the members of the delegation (with names, functional titles, affiliations and nationalities) who require a Conference badge. A copy of the same should also be sent to the General Assembly Branch, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council Affairs Division, Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (Fax: +1 (212) 963-2155);

(b) *Seek accreditation online* via "eAccreditation" between 7 January and 5 March 2015 for members of delegations, including Heads of State or Government, Vice-Presidents, Crown Princes/Princesses, Deputy Prime Ministers and cabinet ministers, as well as their spouses. In order for a Conference badge to be issued, the following procedure must be completed by logging on to http://eaccreditation.un.int:

Step 1: Log on to the website with the user name and password (for registered users only), then select "Create new request for WCDDR"

Step 2: Complete all mandatory fields (Please do not use acronyms and abbreviations).

Step 3: Upload a photograph of the participant (strongly recommended)

Step 4: Review all information carefully and submit.

39. Upon verification of the information on the lists of delegations, the Protocol and Liaison Service will authorize applications submitted online. *It is to be noted that no approval of a Conference badge will be granted prior to receipt of the official lists of delegations or letters of credentials/nomination*. Please note that the review process may take up to four or five days.

40. Passport-size colour photographs of all listed members of delegations, including cabinet ministers and their spouses, are required. All photographs must be recent and taken not more than six months prior to the Conference. Failure to submit photographs at the time of online registration will result in delegates having to line up to be photographed at the Registration Centre in Sendai City. Delegations are reminded that photographs are not required for Heads of State or Government, Vice-Presidents, Crown Princes/Princesses, or their spouses.

41. Members of security details of VIP groups participating in the Conference will be accredited and issued appropriate Conference badges by the United Nations Security and Safety Service.

42. The United Nations Protocol Accreditation Unit will not accredit representatives of non-governmental organizations and other major groups who do not form part of the official delegations of States, intergovernmental organizations, associate members of the regional commissions, specialized agencies and related organizations.

43. Permanent/observer missions and liaison offices are advised to make use of the pre-accreditation option before the deadline of 5 March to prevent delays in Sendai.

44. *On-site accreditation* will be available for States, intergovernmental organizations and associate members of the regional commissions, as well as specialized agencies and related organizations, who have not made use of the pre-accreditation option. On-site accreditation will be processed by the Protocol Accreditation Unit at the Registration Centre on the Conference site; its opening date and office hours will be posted on the Conference website. Delegates seeking on-site accreditation will be required to present proof of credential/letter of nomination, together with a passport, national identity card (ID), driving licence or a government-issued residence permit to complete an on-site accreditation form. Upon verification and approval by the Protocol Accreditation Unit, delegates may proceed to the badging booth for a photo.

45. After 9 March 2015, all official communications, including lists of delegations and Conference-related materials, should be faxed to the United Nations Protocol Accreditation Unit at the Registration Centre on the Conference site. The fax number will be made available and posted on the Protocol website at www.un.int/protocol no later than 27 February 2015. Delegations may also obtain the fax number by contacting the Protocol and Liaison Service in New York (Tel: +1 (212) 963-7171).

46. The opening date and office hours of the Registration Centre will be posted on the Conference website.

47. Conference badges and secondary passes for delegations may be collected at the Registration Centre in Sendai by a member of the delegation attending the conference or representatives of embassies and consulates general of States members in Japan or in the region upon presentation of an official letter authorizing the delegate/representative to collect the Conference badges and secondary passes, together with a passport, national ID, driving licence or a government-issued residence permit. The letter of authorization may be issued by the ministries, permanent missions to the United Nations, embassies and consulates general and must specify the name of the collector.

48. Delegates/representatives collecting the badges must be mindful that it is their responsibility to ensure safe delivery of the badges to members of their delegations. The United Nations Security and Safety Service will not issue duplicate conference badges or secondary passes.

Intergovernmental organizations, specialized agencies and related organizations

49. The Conference will be open to participation by intergovernmental organizations and other entities having received a standing invitation from the General Assembly to participate as observers in the sessions and the work of all international conferences convened under its auspices, and specialized agencies and related organizations, in accordance with the draft provisional rules of procedure of the Conference, as well as relevant intergovernmental organizations that have been granted special accreditation upon approval by the Preparatory Committee of the Conference.

50. The access and accreditation of representatives of intergovernmental organizations and specialized agencies and related organizations follow the same procedures as that for States (see above).

51. Intergovernmental organizations that do not have access to the online eAccreditation system are still required to follow the mandatory accreditation requirement (details in step (a) above) of submitting an official communication providing an authorized list of the members of the delegation to the Protocol and Liaison Service. It is important to include in the letter of nomination the name and e-mail address of the focal point making the request.

Associate members of regional commissions

52. The access and accreditation of representatives of associate members of regional commissions follow the same procedures as those for States (see above).

53. Associate members of regional commissions[1] who do not have access to the online eAccreditation system are still required to follow the mandatory accreditation requirement (details in step (a) above) of submitting an official communication providing an authorized list of the members of the delegation to the Protocol and Liaison Service. It is important to include in the letter of nomination the name and e-mail address of the focal point making the request.

United Nations funds, programmes and entities

54. Interested United Nations funds and programmes should communicate the composition of their delegations to the Conference secretariat, to the attention of Elena Dokhlik at wcdrr2015@un.org no later than 20 February 2015.

[1] American Samoa, Anguilla, Aruba, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Curaçao, French Polynesia, Guadeloupe, Guam, Martinique, Montserrat, New Caledonia, Puerto Rico, Saint Maarten, Turks and Caicos Islands and United States Virgin Islands.

55. Representatives of United Nations funds and programmes will be required to present an official form of identification (passport or valid United Nations grounds pass) to the United Nations Pass and Identification Unit within the Registration Centre to have their photograph taken and Conference badge issued.

Non-governmental organizations and other major groups

56. Non-governmental organizations and other major groups that are in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council or were accredited to the Conference upon approval by the Preparatory Committee must pre-register for the Conference through the Conference website at www.wcdrr.org no later than 20 February 2015.

57. When the pre-registration is completed, each nominated representative will receive a confirmation letter by e-mail. This letter serves as an official invitation to the Conference and is required for badging and may also be used to support visa applications.

58. If a representative of an accredited organization is not able to attend the Conference, he or she cannot be replaced by another representative of the same organization.

59. The Registration Centre will provide badges to pre-registered non-governmental organizations and other major groups; its opening date and office hours will be posted on the Conference website.

60. Participants must come to the Registration Centre with a copy of the confirmation letter and valid photo identification (passport, national ID, driving licence or a government-issued residence permit). Each registered representative of non-governmental organizations and other major groups will receive one individual Conference badge to allow him or her to gain access to the Sendai International Centre.

Media

61. Media accreditation is strictly reserved for members of the press (print, photo, radio, television, film, news agencies and online media) who represent a bona fide media organization. Full guidelines are available from www.un.org/en/media/accreditation/request.shtml.

62. No double accreditation is permitted (for example, as press and delegate or as press and non-governmental organization).

63. Early media accreditation to the Conference will be open from 14 January to 1 March 2015. Accreditation will depend on the presentation of the following documents:

(a) Letter of assignment on official letterhead of a media organization signed by the publisher or editor-in-chief, indicating the name and duration of assignment of the journalist. The letter should be addressed to Media Accreditation and Liaison Unit, United Nations Secretariat, Department of Public Information. It should be sent as a scanned document in jpeg or pdf format to malu@un.org or faxed to +1 212-963-4642;

(b) Completed online form, which can be found and filled out at http://www.un.org/en/media/accreditation/form/.

64. Early applicants who are approved will be e-mailed a confirmation, which should be presented at the Registration Centre prior to picking up the press badge. Press badges must be picked up in person, after presenting two forms of official ID, including a valid passport (national ID, driving licence or a government-issued residence permit).

65. On-site accreditation of media and press will be processed at the Registration Centre; its opening date and office hours will be posted on the Conference website. Media members should bring their letter of assignment and it is highly recommended that they come having completed the online form.

X. Credentials

66. The credentials of representatives and the names of alternate representatives and advisers should be addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and delivered to the Office of Legal Affairs, United Nations Secretariat, New York (Attn.: Ms Tomoko Iwata, Room S-3606 or Mr. Keiichiro Okimoto, Room S-3639), if possible no less than two weeks before the date of the opening of the Conference and no later than the opening of the Conference. All credentials should also be copied to the Protocol and Liaison Service in New York (Room S-0201, Fax: +1 (212) 963-1921) before 5 March 2015 and to the Protocol Accreditation Unit in the Conference's Registration Centre from 9 March 2015 (Please contact the Protocol Office for the fax number.). In accordance with the draft provisional rules of procedure, the credentials shall be issued by the Head of State or Government or by the Minister for Foreign Affairs or, in the case of the European Union, by the President of the European Commission.

XI. List of participants

67. The United Nations Protocol Office in Sendai will compile a list of participants in the Conference. Delegations of States, intergovernmental organizations and associate members of the regional commissions, as well as specialized agencies and related organizations, are requested to submit a comprehensive list of their respective delegations to the Conference, with functional titles and designations of all the delegates, to the Protocol and Liaison Service in New York (Room S-0201, Fax: +1 (212) 963-1921) before 5 March 2015 and to the Protocol Accreditation Unit in Sendai City from 9 March 2015 (Please contact the Protocol Office for the fax number). If the comprehensive list is not received before 13 March 2015, the Protocol Office will use the information collected from the letters of credentials/nomination received.

XII. Security

Security arrangements

68. During the period of the Conference, the United Nations Security and Safety Service, in close cooperation with host country law enforcement agencies, is responsible for providing security and safety services within the Conference venue. The host country authorities are responsible for security in the immediate vicinity of the Conference venue.

69. Admission to the venue and its surrounding area will be strictly limited to persons who are properly accredited and wearing a Conference badge. In view of the need for heightened security measures, the wearing of Conference badges will be strictly enforced. Therefore, access will be denied to anyone not wearing a valid badge. Persons seeking to access the Registration Centre to obtain a Conference badge must present a printed confirmation letter or a copy on a tablet or smartphone at the entry gate.

70. Access to the Conference venue will be limited outside Conference meeting hours. In the interest of the security and safety of all participants, the secretariat of the Conference and the United Nations Security and Safety Service reserve the right to deny and/or restrict access to the Conference venue generally or to any of the rooms or to request that registered participants depart the premises.

Accreditation of national security officers

71. In order to avoid last-minute difficulties, all Governments are requested to ensure the proper accreditation of their security components. Governments may wish to hold direct consultations with the United Nations Security and Safety Service, in particular with regard to arrangements for their national security personnel.

72. The number of Conference badges issued to national security officers will be limited to a maximum of two per Member State.

Vehicle accreditation

73. VIP vehicles will require accreditation. VIP convoys transporting Heads of State or Government will be duly escorted if needed and will be identified accordingly. No other vehicles will be allowed inside the venue.

Other matters

74. The loss of a Conference badge must be reported to the United Nations Security and Safety Service located at the Conference venue.

75. Participants are solely responsible for taking care of their own personal belongings. Any bags or objects left unattended will be removed for security reasons.

XIII. Multi-stakeholder segment

76. A large multi-stakeholder segment is planned for the duration of the Conference, which will include working sessions, Ignite Stage, various exhibitions and study tours. Some excursions will also take place. The events in this segment will be open only to Conference participants.

77. Working sessions will be held under the following four themes: Progress on the Hyogo Framework for Action; Emerging risks; Commitments to implementation; Accelerating implementation. The Ignite Stage will feature 15-minute presentations on a disaster risk reduction topic, project or initiative. Study tours will be organized to provide opportunities to learn about the great east Japan earthquake and ongoing efforts at reconstruction. Conference participants will be able to attend for free. Excursions will be arranged after the Conference for sightseeing and visiting disaster-affected areas. Conference participants and spouses will be able to attend and a possible fee may be charged for each excursion, which will be communicated duly.

78. A programme of the multi-stakeholder segment will be available on the official Conference website at www.wcdrr.org. Queries should be addressed to wcdrr2015@un.org.

XIV. Public forum

79. The Public Forum will be held over the period of the Conference in different parts of Sendai City and will be open to Conference participants and the general public. It will include, among other events, exhibitions, symposiums, workshops and poster exhibitions.

80. Information on the schedule and location of off-site events will be available from www.wcdrr.org/conference/programme/publicforum. Queries regarding off-site events should be addressed to wcdrr2015@un.org and info@hostcity.sendai.jp (Japanese).

XV. Services to persons with disabilities

81. In accordance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, reasonable accommodation will be provided for persons with disabilities.

82. Real-time captioning is planned to be arranged for the opening and closing plenary meetings, official statements and other relevant sessions. International sign and/or Japanese sign interpretation may be arranged on a demand basis for sessions that have spoken language interpretation for English and/or Japanese.

83. Persons with disabilities requiring information on travel, assistance or accommodation arrangements should contact the Conference secretariat at wcdrr2015@un.org with a copy to the e-mail addresses listed on the following website: http://www.wcdrr.org/majorgroups/other. The subject of the e-mail should read "disability-inclusive DRR".

84. Key background and outcome documents of the Conference will also be provided in accessible format.

85. More details about accessibility are available on the WCDRR website: www.wcdrr.org/resources/accessibility.

XVI. Live webcast coverage

86. The United Nations webcast services will provide live and on-demand coverage of the plenary meetings, official statements, ministerial round tables, high-level multi-stakeholder partnership dialogues and press conferences. The coverage will be available on the Conference website at www.wcdrr.org and on the United Nations Web TV website at http://webtv.un.org, in English and the original language of the speaker.

XVII. Connectivity

Internet

87. Free Wi-Fi service will be available for all participants at the Sendai International Centre. Some public forum venues will also provide free Wi-Fi service. One can also access Wi-Fi through a dedicated ID at shops, cafes, taverns and restaurants in downtown Sendai. In addition, prepaid SIM cards, which offer a wireless data service, are available at Sendai International Airport and Sendai Station.

Tablets

88. At the Conference venue, a limited number of tablets (one per delegation) will be available on loan for free on a first-come, first-served basis, only for the duration of the Conference.

XVIII. Visa requirements

89. Visas are required for nationals of certain countries to enter Japan for the duration of the meeting and those who need visas are advised to apply at the Japanese Embassies or Consulates General or Consular Offices. Please check if you need a visa at http://www.mofa.go.jp/j_info/visit/visa/short/novisa.html. For nationals of countries and territories that are under ordinary passport visa waiver arrangements with Japan, a visa need not be obtained.

90. When applying for a visa, participants must present their official confirmation letter certifying their pre-registration at the Conference, passport and visa application form (with photo). Representatives of non-governmental organizations and other major groups or journalists must also present their certificate of employment.

91. Holders of diplomatic and official passports should enquire if a visa is required at their nearest Japanese diplomatic mission. Holders of a United Nations laissez-passer are still required to obtain a visa to enter Japan.

92. It may be necessary to obtain transit visas for the countries that participants will be travelling through en route to Japan. This also applies to holders of the United Nations laissez-passer. Transit visa requirements may differ depending on participants' nationalities. Please check the entry or transit permit requirements for transit countries at your nearest embassy or consulate.

93. When applying for a transit or Japanese visit, members of an official delegation must present a copy of the letter sent by their Government (or international organization) addressed to the United Nations designating them as part of the delegation.

94. When applying for a visa, representatives of non-governmental organizations and other major groups must present the letter of invitation sent by the United Nations confirming their pre-registration at the Conference.

95. Journalists who do not belong to any official delegation must prove that they intend to cover the Conference in order to obtain a transit visa for transit countries.

XIX. Accommodation

96. The online system for reserving accommodation is open for booking for the Conference period at special rates and can be found at https://mice.jtbgmt.com/2015sendai_hotel/.

97. Each room must be reserved individually. If you need to book several rooms, reservations must be made one by one via the online system. The number of accommodation units is limited and it is recommended that they be reserved early.

98. The reservation will be confirmed with the payment of a deposit (equivalent to one night's rate) automatically. If the hotel deposit is to be paid by bank transfer, please send a copy of the bank receipt with the Conference name and booking ID number (and booking name) by e-mail or fax.

99. The special rates for rooms allotted for the Conference are available only through this singular online system. The deadline for reserving a room via this system is 10 February 2015. Any requests after the deadline should be made by e-mail to 2015sendai_hotel@gmt.jtb.jp with all the necessary information, which includes full name, prefix, job title, organization name, personal confirmation number for the Conference, check-in date, check-out date, preferred hotel name (up to three choices) and credit card details for the hotel deposit.

XX. Car parking

100. Car parking will be available in front of the Exhibition Building of the Sendai International Centre only for VIP groups. Space is limited and should be confirmed with the Conference secretariat prior to the Conference by writing to wcdrr2015@un.org with the subject line "VIP Car Parking".

XXI. Transportation

In Sendai City

101. A complimentary shuttle service will be offered during the Conference period, 14 to 18 March 2015, with participants' Conference badge serving as their boarding pass. The shuttle bus will be running in Sendai City on eight routes between most official hotels and the Sendai International Centre. The shuttle bus will also be available between the Sendai International Centre and most public forum venues. For some official hotels, the designated shuttle pick-up and drop-off areas may be a few blocks away. The shuttle bus will operate between JR Sendai station and the registration and accreditation centre beginning 13 March 2015.

102. The shuttle bus will make one to three round trips each hour starting at 6:30 a.m., with the last bus running 30 minutes after the end of the Conference each day. The schedule will be announced at the JR Sendai Station, major hotels and the Conference venue.

103. Please kindly note that the details of the shuttle bus are subject to change with or without notice.

104. Public transportation may also be used to commute to the Conference venue.

From Sendai Airport to Sendai City

105. From Sendai Airport, the Sendai Airport Line Train is available every 10 to 30 minutes to the Sendai Station. Train fare is ¥650 one way per person and the travel time is 25 minutes. Taxis are also available from the Airport terminal, costing on average ¥5500.

From Tokyo to Sendai City

106. There are several ways to reach Sendai Station from Narita International Airport and Haneda Airport in Tokyo, Japan.

107. From Haneda Airport, the Airport Limousine Bus service to Tokyo Station is available every 15 to 60 minutes. The bus fare is ¥930 one way per person and the required travel time is 15 to 60 minutes. At the Tokyo Station, travellers can transfer to JR Tohoku Shinkansen (Hayate, Yamabiko or Hayabusa). Hayate and Yamabiko run every 20 to 30 minutes and the train fare is ¥10,690 one way per person, with a travel time to Sendai Station of 121 minutes. Hayabusa, the limited express train, runs every 60 minutes and the train fare is ¥11,000 one way per person, with a travel time to Sendai Station of 92 minutes.

108. From Narita International Airport, you can select travel either by air or by bus and train. By air, there are daily flights between Narita International Airport (NRT) and Sendai International Airport (SDJ). Airfare is around ¥18,600 for each flight and the flight time is 65 minutes.

109. By bus and train, the Airport Limousine Bus service to Tokyo Station is available every 15 to 40 minutes. At the Tokyo Station, travellers can transfer to JR Tohoku Shinkansen (Hayate, Yamabiko or Hayabusa). Hayate and Yamabiko run

every 20 to 30 minutes and the train fare is ¥10,690 one way per person, with a travel time to Sendai Station of 121 minutes. Hayabusa, the limited express train, runs every 60 minutes and the train fare is ¥11,000 one way per person, with a travel time to Sendai Station of 92 minutes.

XXII. Health

110. Although not mandatory for entering Japan, it is recommended that Conference participants obtain health insurance before travelling. It is also recommended that participants consult a doctor prior to travelling to Japan to discuss any health needs or concerns.

Medical and other emergencies

111. A first aid facility for delegations, located in the Exhibition Building of the Sendai International Centre, will be operating during the course of the Conference. Doctors and nurses accompanied by English interpreters will be stationed in the facility. For a list of hospitals that can provide medical assistance in English, please visit http://www.sira.or.jp/english/life/medical.html.

112. An ambulance and fire extinguishers will also be put in place in or around the Conference facilities in preparation for emergencies. Emergency numbers are listed below. During the course of the Conference, a 24-hour general support desk will also be made available in English.

Emergency numbers

Dial 119 for fire and medical emergency.

Dial 110 for police (in case of traffic accidents or crimes).

Medications

113. Certain medications, such as anti-inflammatory, antipyretic and analgesic drugs, can be easily purchased at pharmacies in the country. However, the purchase of certain medications, such as prescription drugs, antibiotics, antidepressants and others, requires a prescription issued by a local doctor. As such, participants should bring from their countries of origin any continuous-use and commonly used drugs, accompanied by a prescription or proof showing that the drugs are for personal use.

Radiation levels

114. There might be health concerns regarding radioactive contamination in Sendai City and the Tohoku region owing to the Tokyo Electric Power Company's Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant incident. The air radiation level in Sendai City and other cities of the Tohoku region are not high compared with other cities around the world. Sendai City will try to provide radiation-related information that is as accurate as possible.

115. A comparison chart with 2014 official radiation levels can be consulted at http://www.city.sendai.jp/language/1201818_1999.html.

XXIII. Currency

116. The official currency of Japan is the yen (¥).

117. Generally, retailers in Japan do not accept currencies other than Japanese yen. It is therefore necessary to change foreign currency into yen to make cash payments. Foreign currency can be exchanged at the foreign exchange sections of banks and other authorized money exchangers. Normally, banks are open from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on weekdays. You can withdraw cash using your international credit, debit, prepaid and cash cards nationwide at ATMs of Seven Bank (http://www.sevenbank.co.jp/intlcard/index2.html) and Japan Post Bank (http://www.jp-bank.japanpost.jp/en/ias/en_ias_index.html).

118. A currency exchange service and ATMs will also be available on the second floor of the Sendai International Centre. It will only be possible to exchange United States dollars or euros into Japanese yen, not vice versa, and a fee may be charged for the service. The opening hours of the exchange counter will be 11:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. every day during the Conference.

XXIV. Telephone communications

119. The country code for Japan is +81.

Mobile telephones

120. Before travelling, it is advisable to check whether the mobile phone carrier offers roaming services in Sendai.

XXV. Electricity and power outlets

121. Electricity and power outlets in Japan have 2 Type A prongs. The voltage is 100V50Hz. It is strongly advised to check the voltage of each device before plugging it into an outlet. Power outlets inside the Conference venue and meeting rooms are limited. Charging of electronic devices will be possible only in designated areas.

XXVI. Climate

122. The average highest temperature in March in Sendai City is fairly cold (9°C/48.2°F). Warm outerwear is recommended.

XXVII. Tipping/VAT

123. It is not customary to tip in Japan. At some restaurants, a service charge is automatically added to the bill.

XXVIII. Other useful information

124. A travel counter will be available in the Conference venue for participants wishing to make travel arrangements.

125. A Business Centre will provide a paid print-on-demand service.

126. Additional information will continue to be updated on www.wcdrr.org.